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UNION DAY

In a PRAVDA article of 30 December, excerpts of which were broadcast from Moscow on the same day, Poskrebyshv refers to the USSR as a "voluntary" association of states whose sovereignty and equal rights are guaranteed by the Stalin Constitution. The USSR, he says, is a union of states but also of peoples, and in this respect it is radically different from other associations which are merely agreements entered into by government irrespective of the people's desires (pomimo zhelania narodov). Among the examples cited are the British Commonwealth of Nations which is merely a "cover name" for the British colonial empire, the federative system of the American states which facilitates "the physical extermination" of the Negro and Indian minorities and the French Union which has produced unheard-of bestialities in Tunis and Morocco and the present "dirty war" (gryaznaya vojna) in Indo-China.

During the period between 1922 and 1936 which marked the first stage of development of the multinational state, Poskrebyshv reveals, the Party was confronted with the difficult task of "eliminating" the friction among the different nationalities. The tendency the Bolshevik regime fell heir to was toward national segregation on the part of the non-Russian peoples. The Great Russians, on the other hand, maintained a supercilious attitude toward their "foreign" countrymen and even held them in contempt: "... distrust of the Great Russian people had not yet disappeared, and centrifugal forces continued to operate" (... ostatki nedoveria k velikorossam eshche ne ischezli, a tsentrobezhnii sily vse eshche prodolzhal deistvovat). Declaring that all that is now a matter of history and that all the Soviet peoples are equal, Poskrebyshv does not miss the opportunity to drive home the point that the attainment of national equality, among many other revolutionary achievements, was carried out by the Great Russian people through the medium of the Communist Party. The first among equals (pervie sredi ravnykh), the Great Russian people alone, it is implied, are responsible for the ultimate success of Stalin's nationality policy, and the best the other nations can do is bask in the Muscovites' glory. (That the Ukrainians are very conscious of this line has been manifested on several previous occasions. The standard reference to Russo-Ukrainian "friendship" frequently contained in RYANSKA UKRAINA as quoted elsewhere in this report and in official speeches is that the Ukrainian nation "prides itself" on the fact that it was the first to join the Great Russians after the latter overthrew the czarist regime and made the advent of Bolshevism possible. It is possible that such professions of comparative inferiority are not prompted by honest conviction. The uniformity and the stereotyped phraseology employed to express the fawning adulation of the Great Russians suggest that the "Party line" has a great deal to do with it.) The Soviet Union as now constituted, according to the author, is a family of nations held together by a single powerful catalyst which is the Great Russian nation:

The Great Russian people, the first among equal Soviet peoples as the most outstanding nation among all the nations comprising the Soviet Union, is the cementing force which binds the peoples in friendship.

CPYRGHT

Russian text:

Velikiy russkiy narod, perviy credi ravnykh sovetskikh narodov, kak naibolee vydayushchayasya natsia sredi vsekh natsiy, vkhodyashchikh v Sovetskiy Soyuz, yavlyayetsya toy tsementiruyushchei siloy, kotoraya skreplyaet druzhbu narodov.

As a sovereign state, each Soviet republic is said to "enjoy extensive rights" (obladayet shirokimi pravami) in the sphere of foreign affairs. Poskrebyshv

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provides no inkling as to the nature of those "rights" since any mention of, say, the Ukraine's and Belorussia's "rights" in the United Nations, would not make good propaganda in the Baltic States, Kazakhstan or elsewhere.

Writing on the same subject in IZVESTIA (30 December), Gorkin is somewhat more moderate in his reference to the Great Russian people. It was their unstinted help, he says, that enabled the backward non-Russians to catch up with (dogmat) the advanced central Russian State.

RADYANSKA UKRAINA (31 December) reviews Ukrainian achievements under the multinational setup for the past 30 years and stresses the fact that it owes its very existence to that system--and the Great Russian people, the mainstay of the fraternal family of nations. The Ukrainian republic, the paper declares, could not have been saved from imperialist invasion had it not been a component and inseparable part of the Soviet Union and so close to the Russians:

It is the great fortune of the Ukrainian people that they were the first to follow their elder brothers, the Great Russian people, and to take the Soviet path of development. It is a point of national pride of the Ukrainian people

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Ukrainian version:

Velyke schastya ukrainskogo narodu v tomu, shcho vin pershiy slidom za svoim starshym bratom, rossiyskim narodom, stav na radyanskiy shlyakh rozvytku. Toy fakt ye predmetom natsionalnoy gordosti ukrainskogo narodu

Inside Ukraine: Ideological & Political Soft Spots: Evidence of ideological slackness in the Ukraine has been noted in scattered regional references to the subject for some time. The first indication appeared in an unsigned PRAVDA article on 28 December stating that serious shortcomings had been unearthed in practically everything from "undialectical" university instruction to illegal machinations in the retail trade outlets. On 3 January Kiev broadcast a lengthy decision of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, based on a report by Melnikov which had not been broadcast, "on measures for improvement of ideological work in the Ukrainian Party Organization." The greater part of the decision deals with the unhealthy ideological climate produced by the Party's "continuous under-estimation of the value of ideological work" and political lightheartedness in general. The Central Committee points out that the 19th Party Congress materials as well as Stalin's speech and his article on economic problems of Socialism in the USSR are not sufficiently popularized among the masses, and the result is that "large segments of the population" are not familiar with them. Nor is the "leading role" of the Communist Party in the life of the country emphasized strongly enough, it is disclosed:

The same applies to the problem of ... inviolability of the Lenin-Stalin friendship of nations in our country and to the leading role of the Great Russian nation in the fraternal family of nations in the USSR.

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Ukrainian version:

Tse samo vydnosyt'sya i do problem ... nerushimoy Leninskoy-Stalinskoy druzhby narodiv v nashiy kraini, providnoi roly velykogo rossiyskogo narodu v braterskiy simii narodiv Soyuzu RSR.

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The Party's supervision of the daily and periodical press, according to the decision, is on the whole "bad," and the general ideological level of these publications is "low." Many of the newspapers, it is claimed, "do not contain anything new and enlightening" and their language is "incomprehensible and unpopular." Among the publications so criticized are PRAVDA UKRAINY, SOVETSKAYA UKRAINA, RYANSKA OSVITA (a teachers' journal), DNIPRO, ZHOVTEN and others. There has been little in these papers about "Marxist Aesthetics" and "socialist realism" or indeed about anything affecting the problems of social and political life. These shortcomings are said to be further aggravated by the failure of the press to "expose" the hostile ideology of the Ukrainian bourgeois-nationalists, on the one hand, and to harp on the superiority of the socialist system over that of capitalism, on the other. There has been very little emphasis on "American imperialism as a ... strangler of the freedom of nations." Taken to task also for "errors and perversions of an objectivist and bourgeois-nationalist nature" is the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, the institutes of economics, history, linguistics, philosophy and literature as well as "many departments" of social sciences and higher educational establishments.

Tighter control of the press and intensified vigilance against any manifestation of a hostile ideology head the list of the 18 remedial measures offered by the Central Committee to bridge the ideological gaps in the Republic's life. Point four of the decision refers to the "completely intolerable" political situation in the Western provinces of the Ukraine, and says that the Central Committee hereby "orders the Party organs to decisively end this abnormal situation." Party propagandists, it pointed out, have not been sufficiently aggressive in spreading Marxist dogma among the people: ideological work must be "offensive and belligerent" and concentrate on the main target of attack, the agents of the Ukrainian bourgeois-nationalists. Party Committees, Communist and other officials are frequently taken to task for the failure to "uncover and expose" the bourgeois-nationalist Ukrainians who are invariably branded as the "bitterest enemies" (nayluteishi vorogi) of the Ukraine.

The Russo-Ukrainian theme is discussed, in context of linguistic similarity and closeness, in an article by Lukyanenko carried by RYANSKA UKRAINA on 27 December but not broadcast. Criticizing a recently published book on "Russian-Ukrainian Parallels" (rosiysko-ukrainsky paraleli) by Cherednichenko, the author warns against under-estimating the precious similarity between the two languages and makes the remark that the tendency of the book is to emphasize the dissimilarity wherever possible. Cherednichenko, it is claimed, shows a preference for the type of Ukrainian expressions that cannot be easily understood by Russians:

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Wherever two Ukrainian variants are possible, only one is indicated, and the other which is no less legitimate but also coincides with the Russian is not given.

Ukrainian text:

Tam, de v ukrainskiy movi mozhlyvi va varianty, v kazuyetaya tilky odyn, a drugi, ne mensh zakonniy, ale vidomiy i v rosiyskoi movi, ne podayetaya.

This tendency, says Lukyanenko, reveals a "fear of closeness" (strakh pered blyzkiystyu), a fear induced by bourgeois nationalism, which should be liquidated without delay. A thorough rewriting of the book, which was published as a language study aid, is suggested as a preliminary step to that end.

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Kazakh Party Affairs: Insincerity Toward Party & State: Disparaging comment on political affairs in the Kazakh SSR is contained in a long PRAVDA article (25 December) by the Republic's Party boss Shayakhmetov. One of the most common forms of violation of Party and State discipline, he says, is concealing or embellishing the true state of affairs in industry, agriculture or within the Party itself. These are not isolated instances, it is admitted, since available evidence points to dishonesty on every level of the Party hierarchy "beginning with the Central Party Committee and ending with the primary organizations" (nachinaya s TsKPP Kazakhstana i konchaya pervichnymi organizatsiyami). Referring to what might be construed as "empire building" within Party and economic organization, Shayakhmetov inveighs against the "lords" (velmozhi) who will do anything to keep their "preserves" (votchiny) intact. Some of the devious methods these officials are said to be employing to keep the Party and the Government from knowing what is going on are fictitious production reports, inflated requisitions for government supplies, and the formation of tight "family cliques" to facilitate such illegal activities and leave the culprits unpunished: "Under such circumstances even honest officials become corrupted" (v takikh sluchayakh dazhe khoroshie rabotniki nachinayut portitsya). In agriculture, for example, the practice of fulfilling the plan on paper "is fairly popular" (rasprostraneno dovolno shiroko). In industry, complicity between management and Party officials makes large-scale squandering of raw materials possible, and the "honest chatterboxes" (chestnie boltuny) within the Party--who never mean what they say--are responsible for the "morbid manifestations" (boleznennye yavleniya) in that organization.

L'Affaire Fedoseyev and BOLSHEVIK: Criticism of the former chief editor of BOLSHEVIK Fedoseyev is contained in a PRAVDA article of 24 December over the signature of Presidium member Suslov. Referring to the two articles Fedoseyev had published in IZVESTIA on 12 and 21 December commenting on Stalin's latest work, Suslov declares that it is not what the author said but what he failed to say that makes his sincerity doubtful. He notes that although Fedoseyev had been removed from his BOLSHEVIK post three years earlier for unorthodox views, there was no "mea culpa" in his otherwise satisfactory articles. It is all very well for Fedoseyev to admit that until recently "an erroneous and un-Marxian conception" (nepravilnoe, nemarksistskoye predstavleniye) was popular among certain philosophers and economists--that is an honest appraisal of the situation. Suslov asks why he omitted any mention of his own political sins which have been public knowledge for several years. He had the opportunity to do so when writing for IZVESTIA, and his failure to take advantage of it, according to Suslov, raises some doubts about his present professions of Stalinist orthodoxy. Fedoseyev "had sinned not a little" (ne malo pogreshil) against the Party while editor-in-chief of its theoretical journal, and his affinity for Voznesensky and his heretic views as expressed in his book "USSR's Wartime Economy During the Patriotic War" are known only too well.

Revealed in this connection is an hitherto unpublished Central Committee decision of 13 July 1949, dismissing Fedoseyev and the entire editorial college of BOLSHEVIK for their "un-Marxist views" and replacing them by an entirely new set of people. Revealed also is the hitherto unknown fact that the magazines VOPROSY EKONOMIKI (Problems of Economy) and PLANOVOYE KHOZAYSTVO (planned economy), just like BOLSHEVIK, "played an unenviable part" (sygrali nezavidnuyu rol) in the dissemination of alien subjectivist concepts on questions of political economy under Socialism, but no reference is made to the treatment of their case. The above-mentioned decision, incidentally, also mentions Shepilov, former head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department and now PRAVDA's editor-in-chief, as having "committed a crude error" (sovershil grubuyu oshibku) by recommending Voznesensky's book as a textbook for Party secretaries and propagandists.

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Fedosseyev's IZVESTIA articles, Suslov continues, would have been more valuable had they contained the required dose of the author's self-criticism. But that was conspicuously missing and the reader "has a right" therefore to wonder whether what he said had been prompted by an inner conviction or was merely a formal approach to the correct Marxist theses. One can't help wondering "whether the author isn't being clever?" (ne khitrit li avtor?).

The official attitude toward actual or potential repentants may be inferred from PRAVDA's editorial of 5 January dealing with Party and other sinners who are called to account for their misdeeds. Citing a few specific instances of Party and State discipline violation, the paper says that too many offenders show an eagerness to confess, and promise to do better next time, and too many Party organizations let them get away with it. The Party, it is suggested, must fight them, not get into endless arguments with them or make ineffective decisions. Punishment, according to the paper, is a preferable method of dealing with offending bureaucrats and discipline violators.

Among the other topics discussed during the period under review are the selection of wrong people to leading positions and the general "low level" of lecture propaganda. Following are extracts from some of them in chronological order:

25 December--It appears that discipline is lacking even among the Komsomol "aktiv." There is no deep sense of responsibility ... not infrequently unreliable individuals are placed in leading Komsomol posts (MOLOT);

26 December--As a result of poor study of personnel ... hostile elements find their way into the Party ranks (CHERVONY PRAPOR);

27 December--The oblast publishing house is not striving to maintain a high level of publication, it sometimes publishes books without the knowledge of the authors (STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA);

3 January--The ideological level of the lectures delivered by the Society (for the propagation of political and scientific knowledge) is low, and their content is frequently not connected with current affairs (CHKALOVSKAYA KOMUNA);

4 January--But the ideological level of the work of many cultural and educational institutions of our oblast is not equal to the new demands (from Rostov);

4 January--Training course for propagandists are irregular in some rayons, and their ideological level is not high, however, very little has been done in this respect (VELIKOLUKSKAYA PRAVDA);

4 January--It cannot be accepted as normal that the RSFSR Ministry of Education and the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences have not yet published manuals on the methods of teaching history, the Constitution of the USSR and biology (PRAVDA).

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